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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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OGILVY RENAULT
1981 MCGILL COLLEGE AVENUE
SUITE 1600
MONTREAL, QC H3A2Y3
CANADA

[REDACTED]
EXAMINER
CHUONG, TRUC T

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6

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	09/738,294	THOMPSON ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Truc T Chuong	2174

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on _____.
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-21 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-21 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) approved b) disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____.
- 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s) _____.
- 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Objections

1. Claim 15 is objected to because of the following informalities: An extra “s” after “communications” in line 3 page 121 should be removed. Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

3. Claims 1-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Tang et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,793,365).

As to claim 1, Tang teaches a method of initiating communications using a persistent virtual team environment instantiated by a collaboration services suite for facilitating collaboration between members of a team, the method comprising steps of:

providing a graphical interface adapted to enable a person to interact with the virtual team environment to select each one of: a personal identifier associated with a respective team member; and one of a plurality of different types of communications (col. 3 lines 32-41, col. 4 lines 14-28, identification information, col. 11 lines 38-45, a user logs on, col. 14 lines 64-66); and

initiating the communications session using the selected personal identifier and type of the communications (col. 12 lines 9-20 and figs. 1A-8).

As to claim 2, Tang teaches a method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the types of communications comprise: 1-way messaging (error message, col. 14 lines 46-52); 2-way messaging; voice; and multi-media (col. 13 lines 1-12, col. 14 lines 18).

As to claim 3, Tang inherently teaches a method as claimed in claim 2, wherein 1-way messaging comprises one or more of paging because Tang's operating environment uses video, audio, microphone, email, and the like in communications between team members (col. 13 lines 5-12, col. 14 lines 15-18, and figs. 3, 5-6, and 8); therefore, users can setup the email to page them whenever new messages or important news arrive to their personal devices such as: PDAs, cellular phones, pagers, or the like.

As to claim 4, Tang teaches a method as claimed in claim 2, wherein 2-way messaging comprises instant messaging (error message, col. 14 lines 46-50, reflect status, col. 5 lines 59-61).

As to claim 5, Tang teaches a method as claimed in claim 2, wherein multi-media communications comprises one or more of: document sharing, and application sharing (col. 3 lines 59-67).

As to claim 6, Tang teaches a method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the graphical interface comprises at least one communications type icon representative of a respective type of communications (icon, col. 5 lines 20-28 and figs. 1A-5).

As to claim 7, Tang teaches a method as claimed in claim 2, wherein each communications type icon is associated with the personal identifier of the respective team

member, and representative of a respective type of communications in which the team member is available to participate (topic of discussion, col. 3 lines 59-67, and figs. 5-9).

As to claim 8, Tang teaches a method as claimed in claim 7, wherein the graphical interface is adapted to enable simultaneous selection of both the personal identifier and the type of communications by selecting one of the at least one communications type icons associated with the personal identifier (figs. 3, 5, and 7).

As to claim 9, Tang teaches a method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the graphical interface comprises a menu for listing each one of the plurality of different types of communications, the graphical interface being adapted to enable selection of one of the plurality of different types of communications from the menu (col. 8 lines 29-51 and fig. 3).

As to claim 10, Tang teaches a method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising a step of opening a communications initiation window in response to selection of either one or both of the personal identifier and the type of communications (figs 5 and 7).

As to claim 11, Tang teaches a method as claimed in claim 10, wherein the communications initiation window is adapted to permit the person to enter a description of a topic associated with the communications (fig. 9).

As to claim 12, Tang teaches a method as claimed in claim 10, wherein the communications initiation window is adapted to enable the person to send a communications initiation request to the collaboration services suite (col. 14 lines 59-67, and col. 15 lines 1-13).

As to claim 13, Tang teaches a method as claimed in claim 12 wherein the communications initiation request includes the personal identifier of the team member to be invited to join the communication, and information concerning the selected type of

communications to be initiated (sharing information and specific topic between workgroup members, col. 3 lines 65-67, and col. 4 lines 1-10).

As to claim 14, Tang inherently teaches a method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the step of initiating the communications comprises the steps of:

using the personal identifier to send an invitation to the respective team member inviting the team member to join the communications; receiving an invitation response from the respective team member, the invitation response representing whether or not the respective team member accepts the invitation; and if the respective team member accepts the invitation, establishing the communications with the team member, using the personal identifier and the selected communications type because Tang's operating environment uses email and other communication devices (see claim 3 above) in communications between team members; therefore, meeting requests or an invitation along with a topic of discussion can be sent out to the team members, and the requester, who sent the invitation, will receive team members' replications.

As to claim 15, Tang teaches a method as claimed in claim 14, wherein the step of sending an invitation comprises the steps of:

using the personal identifier to select a respective team member profile associated with the team member, the team member profile comprising communications preference information defining preferences of the team member for participating in communications with other members of the team using at least one of a plurality of different communications devices (identifying information, col. 11 lines 37-45);

selecting a communications device associated with the team member for receiving the invitation; and forwarding the invitation to the team member using the selected communications device (note the rejection of claim 14 above).

As to claim 16, Tang teaches a method as claimed in claim 15, wherein the step of selecting a communications device comprises a step of searching the team member profile (identifying information, add/remove user icons, and search chat room directory, col. 11 lines 41-65) for communications information concerning a preferred text communications device (text chat application, col. 12 lines 63-66 and figs. 5 and 9).

As to claim 17, Tang teaches a method as claimed in claim 16, further comprising, when communications information concerning a preferred text communications device is located (Tang's system concerns about physical location of team members along with hardware, computer type, and the like, col. 3 lines 53-58), a step of selecting the preferred text communications device as the selected communications device for receiving the invitation (select text communication device of figs. 3 and 5).

As to claim 18, Tang teaches a method as claimed in claim 17, wherein the step of forwarding the invitation to the team member comprises the steps of:

formulating a text-based invitation message suitable for display by the selected communications device (text string depending on the level of hardware support available to each worker, the network bandwidth available, and the level of privacy each worker desires, col. 5 lines 23-43); and

sending the text-based invitation message to the selected communications device (see claim 14 above).

As to claim 19, Tang teaches a method as claimed in claim 16, further comprising, when communications information concerning a preferred text communications device is not located, the steps of:

searching the team member profile for communications information concerning a preferred voice communications device (col. 8 lines 13-28); and

if information concerning the preferred voice communications device is located, selecting the preferred voice communications device as the selected communications device for receiving the invitation (col. 8 lines 13-28, and see claim 14 above).

As to claim 20, Tang teaches a method as claimed in claim 19, wherein the step of forwarding the invitation to the team member comprises the steps of:

forwarding session information concerning the invitation to an interactive voice response (IVR) interface of the collaboration service suite (audio input and microphone, col. 13 lines 1-12);

establishing a voice communications between the IVR interface and the team member using the selected communications device (col. 11 lines 14-23); and

announcing information concerning the invitation to the team member using the IVR interface (the conversations between team members in text messages of fig. 5 can be voice messages according to audio and microphone as mentioned above).

As to claim 21, it is similar in scope to claims 15 and 19 above; therefore, it can be rejected under similar rationales.

Conclusion

4. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Baumgartner et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,195,086) teach communications, team members, password, and identification (cols. 2-23 and figs. 1-25).

Hayden et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,953,159) teach interaction, members, conference, and icons (cols. 2-36 and figs. 1-37).

Ludwig et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,617,539) teach conference, interaction, members, communications, and icons (cols. 2-31 and figs. 2A-42).

Ludwig et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,237,025) teach audio/video conference, team members, icons, email, and messages (cols. 4-41 and figs. 2A-42).

Riddle (U.S. Patent No. 5,857,189) teaches events, exchange information, members, and different communication devices (cols. 1-16 and figs. 1-7).

5. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Truc T Chuong whose telephone number is 703-305-5753. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Kristine L. Kincaid can be reached on 703-308-0640. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-746-7239 for regular communications and 703-746-7238 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-305-3900.

Truc T. Chuong
June 30, 2003

Kristine Kincaid
KRISTINE KINCAID
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2100